

*Washington, DC* -- Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today secured approval from a key U.S. House panel of a \$6.38 million increase in funding for two critical federal programs that support the Susquehanna Flood Forecast and Warning System (SFFWS). The funding increase will boost the efforts of the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Streamflow Information Program and The Cooperative Water Program. Both programs offer support to the SFFWS network of rain and stream gages by offsetting operation and maintenance costs of the network.

The SFFWS is designed to help save lives and lessen property damage by providing early indications of floods. Federal support for the program has been in jeopardy as a result of the ban on earmarks. Last year, funding that was targeted to the program was eliminated when Senate Republicans filibustered a larger federal budget bill. The program was further put in jeopardy as a result of the budget cuts in a continuing resolution, which Hinchey opposed. Since that time, Hinchey has worked to restore funding for the critical program.

"It was a huge mistake to reduce the funding for this critical program in the first place," said Hinchey. "Putting in place early warning systems to lessen the impact of floods is common sense. Far too many families in Broome County and elsewhere along the Susquehanna have felt the devastating effects of floods. I'm glad we were able to find new resources so that the flood forecast and warning system can be better maintained and I'm going to continue working to ensure that Southern Tier families are protected from future floods."

"With the Susquehanna River Basin being one of the most flood prone areas in the country, this funding level is vital for the public health, safety and welfare of the citizens, businesses and communities throughout the basin," said SRBC Executive Director Paul O. Swartz. "The funding will enable the continued operation of stream gages that provide critical data needed to issue timely and accurate flood forecasts. We extend our appreciation to Congressman Hinchey for taking a leadership role to provide this funding."

Hinchey has long championed efforts to reduce the impact of flooding throughout the Binghamton region. Recently, Hinchey secured \$462,000 for much-needed flood prevention work in the City of Binghamton and the Town of Union. Earlier this year, Hinchey introduced the Flood Insurance Fairness Act of 2011 (FIFA) to assist property owners with new costs they face due to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) flood map modernization program. With thousands of families throughout New York facing a new requirement to purchase flood insurance as they are remapped into flood zones under FEMA's plan, the FIFA legislation would give property owners the option to delay the flood insurance purchase

requirement for up to five years and require FEMA to cover certain costs associated with the flood hazard map appeals process. Similar legislation was introduced by Hinchey in the previous Congress.